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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
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Fort Wayne, IN 46819

Director Anthony Fazio, Office of Rulemaking  
Docket Management System  
U.S. Department of Transportation Room PL401  
400 Seventh Street SW  
Washington, DC 20590-0003

FAA-01-8690-25

Dear Mr. Fazio,

I am writing to comment on Docket Number FAA-2001-8690 concerning commercial air tours of our National Parks.

As an avid park visitor, I find overflights very annoying; they break the solitude and quiet I came to experience, and often disturb the wildlife I am trying to photograph. While I appreciate the desire of others to enjoy our magnificent parks in their own way, tour operators who buzz a quiet meadow or canyon in an aircraft is discourteous and potentially dangerous.

Having reviewed the docket, I fully support the 5000 ft. Above Ground Level altitude recommended by FAA as the triggering altitude for the air tour management planning process. The members of National Parks Overflight Working Group, with nearly unanimous consent, recommended this level. The 5000' ft. AGL will capture most operators that give commercial air tours of parks. Moreover, the 5000' level in no way interferes with general aviation traffic since only flight operators who meet the rest of the Act's definitions are defined as commercial air tour operators.

This level would substantially reduce the noise caused by all types of aircraft, creating a much more enjoyable experience for all park visitors.

It is vitally important that in any Air Tour Management Planning process, the FAA should recognize the National Park Service's expertise on natural quiet issues and defer to the Park Service's authority to determine the impacts of noise on park visitors, resources, and values.

The FAA should also begin immediate enforcement of the "no new entrants" clause of the Act to prevent new air tour operators from flying over parks before the air tour management planning process starts. This is in the best interests of the parks and facilitating the regulation of air tours. Furthermore, the FAA should block any existing air tour operators from flying over parks if they ignored the FAA Advisory requesting air tour operators over national parks to notify the FAA of their over-park operations within 90 days of the passage of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act in April 2000.

Finally, I would request that FAA clearly define for the public and for air tour operators the process through which air tour management plans will be developed. Making everyone aware of the process can only lead to better regulation and fewer violations.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,

*David Tarbox*  
David Tarbox